

NOV 5 1956

**NASHVILLE (Tenn.)
TENNESSEAN**
**Circ.: m. 111,750
S. 191,340**
**Front Edit Other
Page Page Page**
Date NOV 6 1956
The People Be Duped

"We didn't know—we didn't know" is the plaintive Republican cry as their one-time friends launch a war in the Middle East that may have world-shaking consequences.

But this weak excuse is in itself one of the strongest indictments against the State Department and the direction of national affairs in the White House.

Just how much weight it carries around the country is not known but it is not impressive in some Washington circles, and it is shocking to such a well informed writer as Mr. Marquis Childs, who makes it his business to keep up with foreign affairs. That columnist goes far towards indorsing Mr. Adlai Stevenson's charge that the American public has been deceived and bamboozled in this instance, as in many others.

"The disaster to American foreign policy, increasingly visible in its stark and unrelieved nakedness, is all the more shocking against the background of persistent optimism that has come from everyone in the administration in recent months," Mr. Childs writes in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, of which he is a Washington correspondent.

"Part of this may be put down to what Wendell Willkie once dismissed as 'campaign oratory,'" he continued, "but it is more than that since it involves, in at least one major instance, at the onset of the crisis over the Suez canal, what must seem in the light of subsequent events a deliberate effort to conceal the facts from the American public."

* * *

This deceit, it is revealed, lay in the administration's claim to have been successful in restraining the British and French from military action in seizing the canal, when it was known to many that our allies were still committed to this course.

It is charitable to assume that the administration actually believed that its words had been instrumental in preventing military action. Mr. Childs adds, "but it is incredible that American intelligence in all its costly ramifications—diplomatic, Central Intelligence Agency and military—did not know the facts which rapidly became an openly talked about, but never published, national scandal."

That Britain and France, instead of being swayed by our State Department, were merely biding their time is now confessed in Paris. The aggression had been planned for weeks, and only the question of timing remained to be decided.

The diplomatic breach between Paris and London, on the one hand, and the United States, was ever widening. Some French officials said that Washington bore a great responsibility since it had made French leaders look ridiculous by preventing their making good promises they had made to the National Assembly in August when the Suez crisis began. Britain was no less discouraged and disillusioned in its dealings with the undependable American spokesmen.

"It is believed that the original project was to defer the occupation until after the United States election, but that events were precipitated when Hungary, by giving Moscow something new to worry about, hastened Israel's military action," writes Mr. Harold Callender, in a dispatch from Paris to the *New York Times*.

* * *

These are things the American people did not know while President Eisenhower was touring the South and painting a bright picture of Western Europe moving towards greater cooperation with the prospect that Britain and France would join in a customs union with Europe and thereby speed the economic growth of that area.

Yet it is incredible, as Mr. Childs declares, that no one in administration circles was aware of the impending danger about which American citizens and voters were entitled to know.

Technically, it may be true that the administration did not know about the British-French ultimatum of last Monday until confronted with news dispatches. But if our supposedly efficient intelligence agencies of the State Department, CIA and Army, fully agreed with Mr. Eisenhower that a great crisis in the Middle East had been safely passed, a general house cleaning there cannot start too soon.

That there has been a false posture of optimism in regard to the Middle Eastern situation is all too plain, and the evidence of sheer misrepresentation is mounting. Talking sense to the people has never been an administration strong point, but that failure is far less reprehensible than blinding the people's eyes and muffling their ears in the face of impending danger.

If American intelligence knew the truth—and it is impossible, as Mr. Childs declares, to believe it did not—the Eisenhower administration has been guilty of far more than weakness and ineptitude. It has not kept faith with the many who have reposed in it such confidence and trust.

Hiding one's head in the sand and hoping for the best is deadly defeatism—not leadership.